

PROPOSED CRITERIA AND PRINCIPLES  
FOR DESIGNATING A TWO-TIERED  
STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

System Composition

The present State Highway System evolved over several years. Most of the routes were taken into the system in the early 1930s. Prior to the Burns - Collier Act of 1947, State highways began and ended at the city limits. As a result of the Act, the State assumed responsibility of a number of streets that provided route continuity. When bypass facilities were constructed in urban areas, the surface streets were returned to local entities. Section 73 of the Streets and Highways Code (S&HC) describes the process of relinquishing superseded highways. A few of the surface streets were retained by the State because the State and the local agencies could not reach agreement to relinquish them.

In recent years, some local entities expressed interest in gaining control of State highways traversing their communities. This interest resulted from the limitations of the Department's encroachment permit process, workload and resulting controversies over sidewalks, landscaping, lane widths, parking, design standards, and other criteria that the Department uses to operate its system.

The deletion of a route, or a particular section of a route, is a matter of legislative and Departmental policy. The Legislature has specified the composition of the State Highway System in statute. Article 3, Section 300 of the S&HC articulates legislative intent for the State Highway System:

It is the intent of the Legislature, in enacting this Article, that the routes of the State Highway System serve the State's heavily traveled rural and urban corridors, that they connect the communities and regions of the state, and that they serve the state's economy by connecting the centers of commerce, industry, agriculture, mineral wealth, and recreation.

Presumably the Legislature believes that each route is necessary to achieve their intent. The intent statement provides a rationale for evaluating proposed changes to the system.

The Department considers it particularly critical that at least one end of a route connect directly with another element of the State Highway System. In general, the Department should not propose to approve deletions that will create isolated segments of State highways that are not contiguous to the balance of the system or can be reached only by using roads or streets outside Caltrans' jurisdiction.

To mitigate the local agency interests of gaining control of certain facilities that traverse their communities, the Department is reevaluating the compatibility of the State Highway System with present and future statewide mobility needs.

#### The State Highway System:

The Legislature declares it to be essential to the future development of California to establish, construct, maintain, and operate state highways. The routes of the State Highway System serve the State's heavily traveled rural and urban corridors, that they connect the communities and regions of the state, and that they serve the state's economy by connecting the centers of commerce, industry, agriculture, mineral wealth, and recreation. The State Highway System shall consist of routes that are designated as Statewide/Regional significance and of routes that are designated as Local significance. Routes designated as Statewide/Regional significance shall be known as the State Highway Primary System, and shall be under State jurisdiction. Routes designated as Local significance shall be known as the State Highway Secondary System, and shall be under any appropriate governmental jurisdiction.

#### Criteria for the State Highway Primary System eligibility:

To meet the State's growing transportation needs, it is the intent of the Legislature that the composition of the State Highway Primary System shall be an interconnected network of routes that provide the greatest mobility in both rural and urban areas, generally characterized by their higher speed and limited access control.

The State Highway Primary System shall consist of routes that are functionally classified Principal Arterial and some Minor Arterial routes that meet the following criteria:

Connect major centers of population;

Connect primary centers of industrial production, agricultural production, and natural resource activities

with centers of supply of labor and materials and major shipping and distribution points;

Provide access to major recreational regions, national parks and monuments (over 1,000,000 visitors per year).

Provide for continuity of travel into, through, and around urban areas from rural freeway approaches;

Provide for large traffic movements between population and employment centers within urban areas;

Connect with major highways of adjacent states;

Provide international border crossings;

Provide access to important military installations and defense activities; and

Provide an integrated system with a minimum of stubs or spurs to permit general traffic circulation.

#### Criteria for the State Highway Secondary System eligibility

*It is the intent of the Legislature that the routes designated as the State Highway Secondary System be operated and maintained by the appropriate governmental agency which can be most responsive to the public interests in the administration, planning, and construction of that facility. The Department of Transportation has the authority to negotiate with the appropriate governmental agency relinquishment agreements of any State Highway Secondary route or portions thereof.*

The State Highway Secondary System shall consist of routes that are functionally classified as Local, Collectors, and some Minor Arterial, that meet the criteria below. Some City streets and county roads that are designated as STRAHNET Connectors or NHS Connectors, and meet the following criteria could be eligible to become part of the State Highway Secondary System, with the agreement of the local agency and concurrence of the MPO/RTPA.

Provide access to national parks and monuments, state beaches and parks, lakes, hunting and fishing areas, and state institutions of less than 1,000,000 visitors per year;

Connect seats of county governments;

Provide for continuity of travel into, through, and around urban areas from rural highway approaches;

Provide access to less important military installations and defense activities;

Provide for needed capacity in the traffic corridors;

### Functional Classification

The Functional Classification provides a uniform evaluation of describing the purpose and stratifies highways, roads, and streets into various levels according to travel patterns. It recognizes both public travel and land access requirements.

The levels that provide the greatest mobility are the Principal Arterial, and to a lesser degree, the Minor Arterial. The Principal Arterial System is less than 10 percent of the public road system but carries over 70 percent of the travel. Routes which are classified Collectors, and Local are of lesser importance for statewide travel. The Functional Classification is a tool that can be used to evaluate the travel significance of each route.

### Principles For Designating the State Highway Primary System

A variety of functions and uses of the present State Highway System have created a hierarchy of subsystems. Most of the subsystems were designated to satisfy either Federal or State law. To satisfy the statutory requirements, the entire mileage of each subsystem must be included in the State Highway System. Each subsystem should be evaluated to determine whether all of the routes in each subsystem meet the criteria of the State Highway Primary System.

### The "26,000 mile Priority System"

Of the 42,500 mile Interstate System, 26,000 miles have been designated "Priority Network" by the military. California has approximately 1,700 miles. Routes in this category are held to higher standards than the rest of the Interstate System. They are classified Principal Arterial, and meet the "proposed" State Highway Primary System criteria.

### PRO/CON ARGUMENTS:

The pro arguments would be that in hierarchical order these are the routes that the military needs as a minimum to conduct its business in the event of a disaster. The routes are designed to higher standards than any other of the other

routes. These same routes can be used by the State in the event of natural disasters.

The con argument would be that the State is responsible for the maintenance costs out of the State Highway Account. The federal government participated in the construction of these routes, but does not participate for the maintenance costs.

Committee Policy Statement:

*The Committee recognizes the need of having routes in a "ready status" for use in emergencies. The ability of the military to respond to emergencies, even during natural disasters, is an important component to the health and safety of the people of the state. Therefore the entire Priority Network mileage should be part of the State Highway Primary System.*

The Interstate System.

The Interstate System (The Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways) consists of 42,500 miles. California's share is approximately 2,400 miles. All of the routes in the Interstate System are functionally classified Principal Arterial, and meet the "proposed" State Highway Primary System criteria.

PRO/CON ARGUMENTS:

The pro argument supports the fact that these routes are designed to higher standards to provide for the nation's defense, and they connect the nation, the states, and major centers of population and commerce. It provides uniform standards nationwide

The con argument would be that as the System is aging, it costs more to maintain and should not be a local or regional responsibility.

Committee Policy Statement:

*The Committee recognizes the need for a National System of routes that can be used by the military for the nation's defense, and to provide for the movement of people, commerce, and goods across the nation. Therefore, the entire Interstate system mileage should be an important component of the State Highway Primary System.*

### Strategic Highway Corridor Network (STRAHNET)

The military has identified certain routes in the State Highway System which it considers important to the nation's defense. They also have identified a number of streets, roads, and highways which provide access to military facilities in the State. All of the State highways that are functionally classified Principal Arterial, have been designated as part of the National Highway System (NHS), and meet the "proposed" State Highway Primary System criteria. Not all of the STRAHNET Connectors are classified Principal Arterial or meet the "proposed" State Highway Primary System criteria.

#### PRO/CON ARGUMENTS:

Pro arguments. All of the STRAHNET routes were a required component of the NHS designation. The NHS argument described below pertains to these routes also.

Con argument. As in the NHS argument, most of the STRAHNET Connectors are surface streets which could be transferred to the State provided that there is agreement between the State and the local agency. Transferring of any STRAHNET Connectors to the State would increase the State Highway System mileage correspondingly.

#### Committee Policy Statement:

*The Committee recognizes the importance of the Strategic Highway Network routes, along with the Strategic Highway Network Connectors which are highways that provide motor vehicle access to major military installations, in accordance with the United States strategic defense policy. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the entire STRAHNET mileage should be a component of the State Highway Primary System. The STRAHNET Connectors should be looked at on an individual basis whether they should become part of the State Highway Secondary System.*

### The National Highway System

The National Highway System (NHS), as designated, consists of approximately 160,000 miles. California's submittal consists of approximately 7,400 miles. Its purpose is to provide an interconnected national system that serves both rural and urban America. When approved it would connect major population centers, international border crossings, ports, airports, public transportation facilities, and other major travel destinations. The NHS would also meet national defense requirements, and serve intrastate and interregional

travel. All of the routes recommended for NHS designation are classified Principal Arterial. A few of the NHS connectors are not classified as Principal Arterial. Almost all of the NHS designated routes meet the "proposed" State Highway Primary System criteria.

#### PRO/CON ARGUMENTS:

Pro argument. The NHS as designated is the "backbone" of the State's transportation facilities. It consists of all the main routes in the State which carry approximately 50 percent of all the travel on the public road system. These routes are of national-state/regional significance rather than regional/local significance.

Con argument. Some of the NHS connectors provide continuity to terminals, both military and civilian, and belong to local jurisdictions. These facilities would be eligible to become part of the State Highway System if there is agreement between the State and the local agency, and concurrence of the RTPA/MPO. Transferring of any NHS Connectors to the State would increase the State Highway System mileage correspondingly.

#### Committee Policy Statement:

*The Committee recognizes that the NHS, designated by the State for approval by Congress, is the backbone of the State's transportation system. It consists of routes in the Interstate system, the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET), the STRAHNET Connectors, and other Principal Arterial routes which provide access between such Major Arterial and major ports, airports, public transportation facilities, or other inter modal transportation facilities. Therefore, the entire NHS mileage should be included in the State Highway Primary System. The NHS Connectors should be looked at on an individual basis whether they should become part of the State Highway Secondary System.*

#### Interregional Road System (IRRS)

In 1988, the State Legislature established the Interregional Road System (IRRS). It identified a list of routes in the State Highway System which would be eligible to receive construction funds in order to provide the most adequate interregional road system to all economic centers of the state. The eligible routes are outside the boundaries of urbanized areas of over 50,000 population. The IRRS as conceived by the Legislature consists of two parts. The Interregional routes which are the main transportation corridors used primarily to move commerce, and the inter county routes which are the secondary routes that provide

access to tourism and recreational areas. Not all of the IRRS are classified Principal Arterial, or meet the "proposed" State Highway Primary System criteria.

#### PRO/CON ARGUMENTS:

Pro argument. The purpose of the IRRS was to provide the most adequate road system to all economic centers of the state. By including routes that provide for commerce and tourism, the Legislature's intent would be fully met.

Con argument. The inter county group which consist of secondary routes that meander through small communities, State and federal parks, and all recreational areas, outside urbanized areas, should allow for local participation. Local agencies should have the flexibility to provide for tourism and recreational travel. Without considering IRRS extensions through the urban areas, the IRRS system by itself could not provide an interconnected State Highway System.

#### Committee Policy Statement:

*The Committee recognizes that commerce, tourism, and recreation play a role in the State's economy. Therefore it recommends that the entire IRRS system should be included in the State Highway Primary System. The Committee also recommends that where necessary to provide route continuity IRRS extensions though the urban areas should also be considered for inclusion in the State Highway Primary System.*

#### The National Truck Network

To promote national uniformity and increase truck productivity, Congress included in the 1982 Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) a requirement to establish a National Network consisting of the entire Interstate System and other primary routes designated by the Secretary of Transportation. The intent was to permit larger/longer trucks to operate on the designated National Network routes. In California, 2371 miles of Interstate routes, and 1838 miles of other State Highways comprise the National Truck Network. In addition, there are 5858 miles of State highways that are designated as Terminal Access Routes. Total mileage between the two categories is 10067 miles. In selecting terminal access routes, the State recognized that truck productivity is an important component of the State and local economies; therefore, only demonstrated public safety concerns were used as a legitimate basis for disallowing access by these larger vehicles.



#### PRO/CON ARGUMENTS:

Pro argument. The entire National Network and Terminal Access Routes are an essential component of the State Highway System. They facilitate the movement of goods and services from its manufacturing source and point of importation to the markets. The State has the knowledge and expertise to set geometric design standards and to determine the safe movement of vehicles. Not all of the local agencies have the knowledge or staffing available to determine safe movement of vehicles. Many local agencies feel that interstate commerce is not their responsibility.

Con argument. Due to the major economic benefit trucking brings to local agencies, the Terminal Access Routes should be under local jurisdiction. Changes by the State create major economic consequences which effect local agencies. As in the case of the State giving the metropolitan planning organizations greater responsibility in funding issues, likewise, it should support more local control wherever possible.

#### Committee Policy statement:

*The Committee recognizes the importance of commerce, and recommends that routes designated as part of the National Truck Network be included in the State Highway Primary System. All other routes, including those designated as Terminal Access Routes, should be part of the State Highway Secondary System.*

#### The Freeway and Expressway System

In 1959, the Legislature adopted the Freeway and Expressway (F&E) System. The Legislature declared to be essential to the future development of the State of California to establish and construct a statewide system of freeways and expressways and connections thereto without regard to present jurisdiction. One hundred and fifteen routes were include in their entirety, and portion of another 53 were designated as part of the F&E system. At the same time, the Legislature passed SCR No. 26 directing the Department to use 20-year planning periods for the development of the F&E system. To date, not all of the freeway and expressway routes in the statutes are developed to F&E standards. Of the 11,970 miles designated in the statutes, approximately 5764 miles have been constructed to F&E standards.

#### PRO/CON ARGUMENTS:

Pro argument. The routes designated F&E in their entirety are the "backbone" of the State's transportation facilities.

These routes carry the preponderance of the State highway traffic. The State has the expertise and the resources to plan, design, construct, and maintain this type of facility.

Con argument. Not all of the highways designated as part of the F&E system are classified Principal Arterial, or meet the proposed state highway criteria. Of the 53 routes that only portions have been designated as F&E, the remaining portions would either have to be considered for F&E designation, or the entire route should be dropped from the system in order not to have gaps.

#### Committee Policy Statement:

*The Committee recognizes the importance of the F&E System. These multi-lane roadways account for over 50 percent of the trips on the State Highway System. The Committee also recognizes that almost one-third of the F&E routes are only partially designated as F&E, and could not be considered as a system. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the composition of the State Highway Primary System should include the F&E system described in Statute. The Committee also recommends that where necessary to provide route continuity the portion of a route not on the F&E system should also be considered for inclusion in the State Highway Primary System.*

*Finally, the Committee recommends that the composition of the State Highway Primary System should not consider any other subsystems below the F&E system at this time.*

#### Funding

Section 73 of the S&HC specifies the conditions under which the State may relinquish state routes to local agencies.

1. When a route has been superseded by relocation.
2. When a route has been deleted from the State Highway System.
3. When facilities constructed as part of the highway, but do not constitute part of the main traveled way.

Section 73 requires the State to place the facility in a state of good repair for any of the above conditions before relinquishing it to a local agency. Under present law, if a route is being deleted from the statutes, the State is not responsible for placing it in a state of good repair.

Inappropriate state highways which are those routes categorized in this policy as the State Highway Secondary System would add a fourth category of routes eligible for

relinquishment to local agencies. The proposed criteria of relinquishing any route on the State Highway Secondary system would not consist of any specific monetary value other than what the State and the local agency have agreed upon, provided that the terms and conditions of the agreement are acceptable to the California Transportation Commission. At a minimum, the agreements should take into account maintenance costs, liability costs, benefits to the community, and other indirect costs that effect the operation of a route.

### Recommendation

The Task Force recommends subdividing the present State Highway System into two categories: routes of Statewide/Regional significance, and routes of Local significance. The Routes that are categorized as "Statewide/Regional" would be referred to as the STATE HIGHWAY PRIMARY SYSTEM. They would be owned, operated, and maintained by the State, and would not be subject to relinquishment. The present State Highway System would be reevaluated to determine which routes meet the criteria of the State Highway Primary System. Routes which are categorized as "Local" shall be referred to as the STATE HIGHWAY SECONDARY SYSTEM. Routes in the State Highway Secondary System would remain in statute, signed with the appropriate route shield, and would be owned, operated, and maintained by the governmental agency which can be more responsive to the public interests in administration, planning, construction, and operation of that facility. Routes of the State Highway Secondary System or portions thereof could become multi-jurisdictional. Under this proposal, the statutes would be revised to permit the agencies to work out agreements relinquishing routes or portions thereof to each other.

The composition of the State Highway Primary System shall consist of routes that have been designated as part of one or more of the following categories:

- The 26,000 mile Priority System
- The Interstate System
- Strategic Highway Corridor Network (STRAHNET),
- STRAHNET Connectors on a route by route case.
- The National Highway System (NHS),
- NHS Connectors on a route by route case.
- Interregional Road System (IRRS)
- The National Truck Network. (Terminal Access Routes to the National Truck Network are not included).
- The F&E System

The Task Force excluded from this category Terminal Access Routes to the National Truck Network.

The composition of the State Highway Secondary System shall consist of all other routes not included in the State Highway Primary System.

The Task Force proposal does not recommend any specific funding program for relinquishing routes in the State Highway Secondary system to local agencies. It recommends a flexible funding package that would include as minimum criteria maintenance costs, tort liability, motorists benefits, community needs, and other factors effecting the operation of a route.

Amend Section 300 of the statutes as follows:

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The State Highway Primary System

To meet the State's growing transportation needs, it is the intent of the Legislature that the composition of the State Highway Primary System shall be an interconnected network of routes that provide the greatest mobility in both rural and urban areas, generally characterized by their higher speed and limited access control.

The State Highway Primary System shall consist of routes that are functionally classified Principal Arterial and some Minor Arterial routes that meet the following criteria:

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Provide access to important military installations and defense activities; and

Provide an integrated system with no stubs or spurs to permit general traffic circulation.

#### The State Highway Secondary System

It is the intent of the Legislature that the routes designated as the State Highway Secondary System would be signed with the appropriate route shield and would be owned, operated, and maintained by the appropriate governmental agency which can be most responsive to the public interests in the administration, planning, and construction of that facility. The Department of Transportation has the authority to negotiate with the appropriate governmental agency relinquishment agreements of any State Highway Secondary route or portions thereof.